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CHAMPNEY THE PASTELLIST.

BY MRS. OLIVER BELL BUNCE.



IT WAS in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that pastels became the fashion. When by the aids of these delicate bits of chalks in all their varied tones and tints, a medium was reached, for the reproduction of feminine beauty, an art in which the charms of childhood has no equal. It was at this period, that the great men and women of the day were artistically painted, in the richest of costumes of satins and laces, in which, by this pastel process, the purity of color and tenderness in hues so soft and alluring that each portrait when completed, became a gem to be handed down from generation to generation, as a work of art never to be excelled.

We are told that the word pastel, was derived from *pastello*, which signifies "little rolls of paste." But in reality, the discovery of pastel as an art, is unknown. However, it made its first appearance in France, in 1720, by one Rosalta Carriera, and so great was her management of this medium, that she became the fashion, and set all Paris raving over the new invention in the art of painting. To add to her fame, she made a portrait of Louis the Fifteenth, when only ten years old. When she returned to her native land, she became more popular than ever, and her charming pastels can now be seen in the Dresden Museum, and Academy of Fine Arts in Venice.

And now, like the great masters of old, J. Wells Champney is rapidly making for himself a great place, in this special line of portraiture; of ideal, and real heads, so true to nature, that they are speaking likenesses, the flesh tints so well carried out, the atmosphere of these pictures so rich in graduations of color, that they become a charm in every instance.

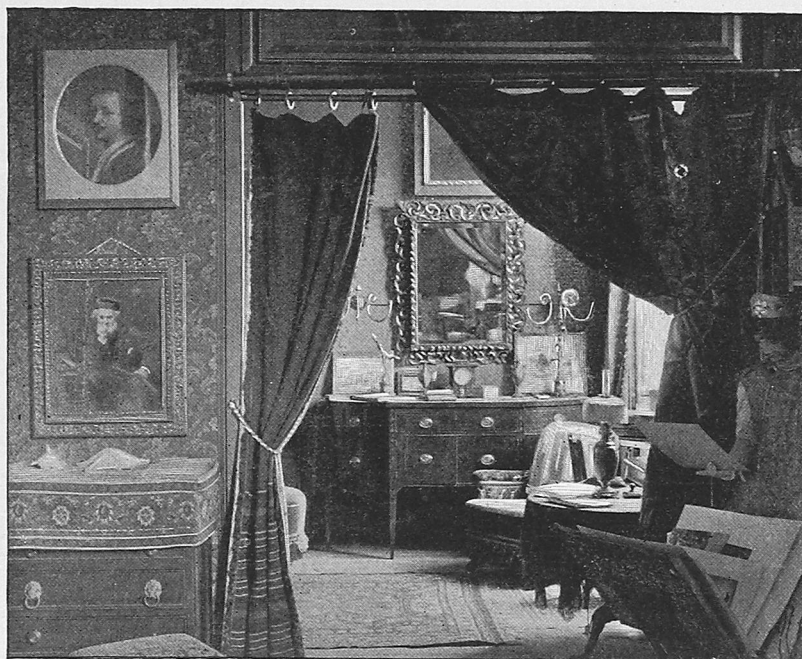
To be a genius, in any art, as a rule, the desire manifests itself at a tender age in childhood, and so at the early age of ten, Mr. Champney commenced to know the value of pen and pencil. Being a boy of an ambitious turn of mind, he naturally sought some outlet for his childish imagination, and engraving, in a measure appealed to him, more than anything else.

When a lad of fifteen, an advertisement in a paper caught his attention, and straightway he embraced this opportunity to place himself as a wood engraver, learning all the details of the business, and conquering the obstacles which from time to time presented themselves before him. It was about this period that the civil war became the absorbing theme, and the young student rushed forward in the vortex.

During that year of army life, and army strife, this enterprising young man, made for *Harper's Weekly* a number of thrilling war sketches, which gave him a higher lift in the art life he had chosen. After the conflict of the States was over, he took up again the daily routine of engraver and draughtsman.

It was at the age of twenty-three, that he first saw a glimpse of the Old World, making Paris his starting place, and leading while there, the daily life of the Bohemian art student. After six months of hard work, he steered his course

to the Royal Academy of Antwerp, having for his companions Millet, and Maynard, and accepting the academic discipline under the best of Flemish instructors. Then back to Paris, to settle down again, under



MRS. CHAMPNEY'S STUDIO.

the guidance and tutelage in art of the noted genre painter, Edouard Frère. Then a winter in Rome, and finally a return to America after an absence of four years.

By this time, he had made up his mind pretty conclusively, that he could, with success, follow a certain line of art, and that was the painting of small genre pictures of rural life, home and rustic scenes, children being the interesting feature. And so Mr. Champney made his bow to the public, as a child painter.

When just about settling in Boston, he was offered a position at a lucrative salary by *Scribner's Magazine*, which was then under the editorship of Dr. Holland, but now the *Century* of today. He was asked to illustrate the great South, for a series of articles written by Edward King.

It was at this time, he met his fate in the person of Miss Elizabeth Williams, a lovely young girl, the daughter of Judge Williams of Leavenworth, Kansas, and in a short time they were married, making a bridal trip to Europe, and a permanent residence at Econen, near Paris. The next year a son was born, which the young couple named after their friend, the great painter Edouard Frère.

Afterwards followed a line of travels in Spain, a tour up the Amazon River, making a series of illustrations, which found their way in the magazines. Then a Professorship at Smith College in which lectures and art talks were given at Hartford, and Norwich, Connecticut. Then, declares Mr. Champney "It was during this period of art work, that the pastel appealed to me, more and more and finally I literally dropped into it, feeling sure that I could make a success, if only time was given me to pursue this art. As an encouragement, Mr. Charles Carroll, the author of 'Davy and the Goblin,' was my first sitter; since then, I have made a pastel portrait of the Honorable John Bigelow, Mr. William E. Dodge, Mrs. Charles Barnard, Mrs. Eggleston the daughter of Dr. Tod Helmuth, and Mr. H. H. Rogers of the Standard Oil Company, and later on, Mrs. General Torrel, of Savannah, Georgia."

Mr. Champney asserts that he paints pastels, because he finds people like his style of painting this way better than any other. Be that the case or not, as a

pastellist, Mr. Champney holds rank second to none, "portraits that are interesting in themselves, and doubly so because of their medium, and the new use to which they have been put as a unique scheme of decoration."

Some years ago, this clever man made a European tour, for the sole purpose of making copies of famous court beauties. He left no stone unturned, for he worked hard in his visits to all the galleries in the great cities, and returned with splendid productions of celebrated women of long ago. Among them, was a copy or two of Romney's famous portrait, "The Parson's Daughter," and so exquisitely was it painted, and so realistic in all respects, that it was sold fifteen minutes after the exhibition was opened. Not many months ago, Mr. Champney made for the new Manhattan Hotel, a series of ideal portraits, decorative bits for the dining-room, a peculiar fitness for this place, a superb finish for the walls; and an ornamentation as well. A likeness of charming faces, a scheme of the five senses, which would make for any apartment an entertaining show, and each one invested with a delightful and sumptuous coloring, together with an art atmosphere; a decided ornamentation effect, for so they were intended.

To make the art of Pastel more fully understood, and to show the great use of these chalks as a medium, a few lines of the delightful essay entitled "The Golden Age of Pastel," by the artist's wife, Elizabeth W. Champney, are worthy of mention. "That these little rolls of



AN IDEAL HEAD IN PASTEL.
By J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.

paste, by their delicate purity of color, and crispness of texture, lend themselves more easily than any other medium to the reproduction of feminine beauty, and the exquisite complexion of childhood." She also asserts "That pastel is not a perishable medium, indeed, it preserves the freshness against atmospheric influence much better than pigments used with oil. When pastel portraits fade, it is safe to assume that a poor quality of pigments was used. The greatest enemy of the pastel is dampness."

But to understand more fully these gems of art, one should visit the studio of this great artist, and take in the brilliant paintings that show themselves at every turn.

It is a big roomy place, an apartment of some three

rooms, the studio, being the large one. In this artistic den, there are hangings, and draperies without end, a medley of Oriental objects. Above the mantel, which forms a cosy corner, is a curtain, poled from the ceiling, which falls in graceful lines to the shelf, ornamented by some good bits of faience, and below, a lounge rich in a red covering, set off by pillows in different tones and tints to match the entire scheme. In the centre of the room is a table, on which are the tools of the artist, and near by an easel, on which rests an unfinished portrait. There are rare pieces of mahogany, here and there,

Just beyond this place of art there is the boudoir of Mrs. Champney,—illustrated herewith—a pretty bright apartment, in which the hand of a woman is over all, near the window, is a writing desk, a quaint chair, a couch in cashmere tones; above it, a hanging lamp, and the song of the canary bird which from time to time one hears.

Now every one who has a knowledge of literature, must know the charming stories of Elizabeth Champney. The poems which have made her name famous. The various editions of the Witch Winnie Series in art



STUDIO OF J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.

which hold scrap books, sketches, blue prints, and finished photographs, for you must know, this clever man is great as an amateur in the art of photography.

In fact, all the material which an artist of the brush needs on hand, during the working hours. At present, Mr. Champney is employed on an oval pastel, the painting of a fine boy and charming fair haired girl, the children of a western magnate. After the work of a day or two on any of these Champney pastels, the likeness seems to progress with a marvelous rapidity, and so far, as to be almost a finished picture. The dress has the appearance of a texture silken in tone, a ribbon of satin has a sheen effect, and the face, in a way expresses the living reality. It may be the beginning of a pastel, but to the looker-on it appears to be a finished portrait.

life in different countries, which have been so charmingly represented. Those quaint and clever little stories of how "Paddy O'Leary Saved His Learned Pig" from the famine, "The Babbling Tea Pot," and other tales, which, with books of historical interest, have made her name well known to the public.

But with all these busy days, which bring literature and art with its various duties in all directions, the Champneys are a happy family. Their children—a talented young man and sweet young girl—are now in Paris, making for themselves a name in art. Miss Marie Champney, having a decided taste for miniature painting. These young students have been given by their parents every educational advantage, and so clever are they, that both have won the title of B. A.



AN IDEAL PASTEL HEAD.
BY J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.

Some time since, there was an exhibition of Mr. Champney's pastels in one of our western cities, and he wrote a preface to the catalogue which may bring information to those who do not quite understand the art of the pastellist. In these words most appropriate, this clever man asserts "There are in the world many beautiful paintings which cannot be satisfactorily translated into black and white; by any known process, because the charm lies largely in gradations of color, and in qualities brought about by time. These oil pictures could not be duplicated by the very men who produced the originals. In many cases, the pigments have undergone changes which only time can bring. Any effort to imitate these changes in oil paints, is likely to prove unsatisfactory as the new copy, will in turn ripen and darken, so that the faithful copy of to-day, in a few years will be lower in tone than the original, which has had a hundred or more years to reach its present state."

"The pastel 'translations' should under favorable conditions remain as first made, and in them an attempt to render the optical effort of the picture, rather than the technical process by which the picture was painted has been kept to the fore. The beauty and delicacy of color, of the old pictures, it is hoped will be found in these pastel 'translations' in which the effect of the originals as a whole has been uppermost in the pastellist's mind."

So this pastel painter of the day, has given us an art worthy of any era. A charm in portraiture that is lasting, a delight to decorate our walls, a memory of those long since departed whose histories are renowned in ages when art, literature and science had full sway. It is the hand of the master, that makes J. Wells Champney a great pastellist; a man, modest in the extreme, that lives in a world of his own, full of ripe ideas, and seeking for charming possibilities.

STUDIO NOTES.

THE Kit-Kat Club have a large room in East Fifteenth Street which is very decorative in a way. The walls are in good terra cotta, and over the mantel is a piece of ornamentation of objects well grouped together. While around the room are a number of gas jets that are available for a general exhibition.

On the walls are some sketches, quite a number of good water colors, while at each end is a picture full of life, that shows how these artists of the brush, employ their time in the evenings spent there.

This room has been used for different art entertainments, its occupant, Mr. Emilie Huber, being a musician and teacher of no mean order.

The Ladies' Art Association, have rooms at 107 West One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, where Miss Ada Brewster, the painter, is curator from two until six o'clock. This Association is giving certain evenings on Art and Literature, at the houses of the different members.

On Tuesdays it is at the residence of Mrs. Doughty, and Thursdays at the home of the well-known literary woman, Mrs. Lee C. Harley. All these studies are conducted by Miss H. W. Denison of Emerson College, a lady well-known for her intellectual qualities.

The Ladies' Art Association is this winter employed in a certain line of work by its members, who are anxious to make decorative art, and art industry, their chief features, such as brass hammering. Impression pictures of flowers, a careful study of coves—those of the larger size—the coloring of woods, and carving of cabinet doors, and designs of textile fabrics.

Every sort of ornamentation that pertains to a home, and a knowledge of how it should be made, and brought to act as a power when finished.



A STUDY IN MARBLE.
BY AUGUST LINDSTROM.